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STUDY SHOWS BOAT REFUGEES' CHILDREN ACHIEVE ACADEMIC SUCCESS

This article by Dr. Nathan Caplan, Dr. John Whitmore, Quang Bui, and Marcella Trautman summarizes a study they completed in June at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Caplan is program director for the university's Institute for Social Research and professor of psychology. Whitmore is a historian and research scientist with the university's Center for South and Southeast Asian studies. Quang Bui is a Ph.D. candidate in political science. Trautman is a Ph.D. candidate in psychology. The study was sponsored by a grant from the Spencer Foundation.

Beginning in 1975, hundreds of thousands of refugees fled Southeast Asian countries and were resettled in the United States. Collectively, those refugees who fled after 1978, particularly from Vietnam, were referred to in the press as the "boat people". Their escape was perilous. For those who left by boat, it is estimated that as many as 50 percent perished at sea.

Those arriving in the U.S. in the fall of 1978 differed from earlier arrivals who left Vietnam with the fall of Saigon in April 1975. Largely, these had been educated Vietnamese who were familiar with Western culture and possessed English-language skills. On the average, the boat people were less educated and more limited in job skills, education, and English proficiency.

Recent press reports, though, have suggested unusually high levels of academic success among the children of these boat refugees. Our objective was to document this academic success and to examine its relationship to traditional cultural values and other refugee attributes.

It is important to note, too, that this study analyzed the academic achievement of a particular group of refugees, mostly Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese from Vietnam and some lowland Lao, who arrived in the U.S. after the autumn of 1978. The findings cannot necessarily be generalized to all refugees from Southeast Asia.

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Boat Refugees' Children Academically Successful We learned several things from this study, some of them surprising. First, despite the trauma they have suffered, the children of the recently arrived "boat people" refugees evidence a high level of academic achievement, whether measured by grade-point average or scores on nationally standardized tests.

This extraordinary level of scholastic achievement is true for the group as a whole and is not the result of a few exceptional children raising the overall mean.

We can expect these refugee students to do even better in the future. As literacy skills improve, it is reasonable to expect that grades will improve in all courses, and, accordingly, the overall GPA will also rise.

The main reason for the success of these children appears to be the compatibility of what they bring with them--traditional cultural values, cohesive family structure, achievement orientation, and the ability and willingness to adopt new coping strategies--with the requirements and opportunities for success in the U.S.

Study Shows High Level of Economic Progress In a larger study on the economic achievements of the boat refugees that we did for the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) last year, we found that the families of these children demonstrated a surprisingly high level of economic progress in a short period of time.

Their progress toward economic self-sufficiency and their level of economic attainment in an absolute sense reveal a rather remarkable achievement given the hardships faced by these refugees, especially keeping in mind the differences between these refugees and those who came into the U.S. in 1975 when Saigon fell. The refugees in this study were far less able to handle the English language; they arrived with no economic resources; they were not as well educated; and, finally, the state of the U.S. economy was far worse upon their arrival than it was in 1975.

In short, the families of these children climbed out of poverty, in the midst of a poor economy, with minimal outside help. Their story is one of outstanding initiative and diligence in the face of very difficult circumstances.

Over One-fourth Have "A" Averages The data for the educational achievement study came from parent interviews and school records for 200 households containing 536 school-aged children--Vietnamese, ethnic Chinese from Vietnam, and lowland Lao refugees in five U.S. locations. We obtained grades for the spring 1984 term. Twenty-seven percent had an overall grade-point average (GPA) in the A range. Exactly ten percent had a perfect 4.0, or straight-A, average.

Fifty-two percent of the students had overall GPAs in the B range, 17 percent in the C range, and 4 percent had GPAs of D or less.

The refugee student performance was even better in terms of mathematics alone. Forty-four percent received a 4.0 GPA in math, while another 3 percent earned either a 3.7 or 3.8. Another 32 percent had a grade of B, 15 percent C, and 6 percent below a C.

The mean overall GPA is 3.05, the mean math grade is 3.18, and the mean science grade is 2.9.

Above Average Results on Achievement Test Of the 97 refugee students for whom California Achievement Test (CAT) scores were obtained, 29 percent placed in the top 30 percent nationally. Forty-five percent of the students placed from the fortieth percentile to the sixty-ninth, and 25 percent below the fortieth percentile.

Overall, the refugee students did better on the CAT than did all students nationally, with fewer in the lower 40 percent, more in the middle 30 percent, and almost the same in the top 30 percent.

In general, the refugee students did much better in mathematics and relatively less well in reading and language, though spelling was an area in which many excelled. Sixty-one percent of the refugee students placed in the top 30 percent nationally in mathematics. The students sampled were slightly below the national average in reading and language.

High Performance a General Characteristic These high results on standardized tests showed no significant variation between different school systems. It is important to note that these students attained high academic marks in schools which are in low-income or inner-city areas. That is, they

succeeded in schools generally considered to be less fortunate with respect to economic and related resources and, at the same time, associated with less motivated and more disruptive student bodies.

Had the refugee students done well only on GPA, there would be reason to discount their achievements. That they did very well when compared nationally on the CAT would argue that their scholastic achievements are impressive either by local or national standards.

Values Related to School Achievement To account for the high level of academic achievement, hundreds of variables, including data from the ORR economic self-sufficiency study and data collected specifically for the education study, were used to build an explanatory model. While the explanatory power of the model is limited by several factors, we offer the following interpretations of the academic achievements of this group because the model represents the best conceptual framework for giving meaning to the data.

In interviews, the refugee families rated the importance of each of a list of traditional cultural values. The single item viewed as highly important by virtually every household was "educational achievement" (99 percent). It was followed closely by "a cooperative and harmonious family" (97 percent) and "responsibility about carrying out obligations" (97 percent).

Next in perceived importance was a set of family-centered values: "Respect for family members"; "respect for elders"; "a cohesive family"; "family loyalty"; and "a family guided by morality and ethics". Between 88 and 94 percent rated these values extremely or very important. Of the family-related values in the list of twenty-five items, five were viewed as being among the most important by about 90 percent of the respondents.

Other items in the value hierarchy viewed as important emphasize commitment, the work ethic, and impulse control: "restraint and discipline"; "a belief in the value of hard work"; and "willingness to sacrifice the present for the future".

The three value items considered most important, in order of the frequency mentioned, were the following: "educational achievement"; "a cohesive family"; and "a belief in the value of hard work". These items were cited among the three most important values by over 95 percent of the respondents.

When asked to indicate the goals and preferences they view as most important for their nonrefugee, non-Southeast Asian neighbors, the two cited most often were "seeking fun and excitement" and "desire for material possessions"--that is, the very two items cited least often as important by the refugee respondents when designating their own value preferences.

Variables Account for Variation in GPA The technique used to analyze the data, a multivariate analysis, takes into account simultaneously the effects of several potentially important variables, allowing us to develop a more comprehensive and realistic understanding of the determinants of GPA.

The item which was best able to account for, or "explain," differences in GPA between households was the degree of importance respondents placed on the statement, "finding a place for the family in the community and in relation to the past." Variation in the response to this value statement explained 13 percent of the variance on GPA. It is the lengthiest, and perhaps the most complex, of the value statements used in the questionnaire. Undoubtedly, it captures a number of important attitudes toward the resettlement process, such as "fitting in" and continuity with the past.

"Ashamed to be dependent on welfare" contributes an additional four percent to the variance. "Willingness to sacrifice the present to the future" also contributes four percent to the variation, and suggests that the educational performance of the children represents a human capital investment in the future by the family.

Refugees Perceive Effort as Key to Success The boat-refugee familie studied see the potential for scholastic achievement to lie within themselves and their own efforts. Over 90 percent of them felt that what helped their children to gain such success was the love of learning, the ability to work hard, and the capacity to persevere. Even "innate intelligence" fell slightly behind "effort" in their rating.

Much agreement existed in the elements that were seen to hinder the children in

their studies. More than two-thirds of the respondents recognized the need to gain a better proficiency in English for scholastic achievement.

Disruptive behavior by non-Southeast Asian students was seen as a major negative element. This appears to reflect the refugees' fear that their children will be affected by what they view as the materialistic and hedonistic lives of the surrounding community.

Other hindrances include problems of transportation and family demands. On the other hand, the students' physical and emotional problems and school deficiencies were seen as minor hindrances. Fate and luck were also ranked low as elements affecting performance.

In sum, the refugees look within themselves for the means to advance academically. They see their environment as presenting some barriers or providing some aid for their efforts, but the efforts themselves are seen as most instrumental to academic success.

As shown in the ORR self-sufficiency study, the refugees' tendency is to push ahead, relying mainly on their own efforts, supplemented by whatever external help is available. In this way, neither the economically depressed conditions of the early 1980s nor any deficiencies of the schools their children attend have held them back. Indeed, the refugees seem to say that they themselves do not expect to be held back by such external factors.

Values Important, Opportunity Essential, to Refugees' Success Important, then, is the compatibility of the refugees' values with the attitudes, including the "work ethic," associated with success in the U.S. The high level of motivation, willingness to face new experience and endure hardships to become self-sufficient, and the optimistic "can-do" spirit are reflected in the values expressed by the refugees.

But it is critical that there be opportunity in order for the refugees' aspirations to materialize. Despite difficult circumstances, these families climbed out of welfare dependency rather rapidly, making the very most of the available job opportunities. It would be safe to venture, though, that for long-term social and economic advancement, education is viewed as a more plausible avenue than is mobility through workforce participation. The opportunity for their children's education is far less restrictive than the opportunity for adult employment, and the children are doing extremely well in school.

It is also worth pointing out that the opportunity for educational advancement in the U.S. is more egalitarian than was traditionally true in Southeast Asia. Many families are thus able to provide their children an education which would have been reserved only for the more advantaged. This new opportunity for education may also be a motivating factor that helps explain achievement.

Success Attributed to Traditional Values, Not Adoption of New Ones Two general points deserve emphasis before going to additional data. First, much of the past literature on refugees and immigrant groups has emphasized that successful resettlement comes about because refugees adopt the ways of their nonrefugee neighbors. The refugees studied, however, appear to have gotten along as well as they have because of what they have brought with them--in particular, their traditional cultural values, which are perceived as quite different from those attributed to their nonrefugee neighbors.

Second, their values have helped them achieve because they are compatible with the requirements for success in the U.S., a vastly different social and economic landscape than what they knew in the past.

Equality of Wives' Role a Key Variable When all available variables were analyzed in relation to GPA, the first three items, accounting for an important 33 percent of the GPA variation, pertain to family roles and the relative influence of the husband and wife in decisionmaking.

Children with higher GPAs came from homes where both parents were reported to participate in making a decision such as whether or not the husband should quit his job. By contrast, those students with lower GPAs came from homes where such a decision was made by the husband alone, or with minimal input from his wife.

The item ranked third in accounting for GPA variance also relates to the relative equality of the husband and the wife in the home. Children with higher GPAs came from

homes which disagreed with the statement, "A wife should do whatever her husband wants."

Reading to Children Found Critical The second most important factor in explaining GPA levels was whether parents read to the children at home. The children who do better in school come from homes where the parents read to them.

Almost half of the parents reported they read to their children. Of those, twice as many read in their native language as in English. Those children read to in the native language had somewhat higher GPAs than those read to in English. While this difference in mean GPA is not statistically significant, the direction of the difference is, nonetheless, of interest.

At a minimum, this finding suggests that the emotional aspect of reading to children may be as important as the cognitive aspect with respect to performance in school. It also suggests that skill gained in the native language may be transferred to English. Or, at least, the language barrier does not prevent the communication and transfer of other competencies or values that lead to academic achievement.

Belief in Ability to Realize Goals Important The next two items of importance, measured by independent contributions to the variance in GPA, come from those which reflect a person's feelings of efficacy, or the degree of perceived control over external factors which affect one's life.

Parents of the higher achievers expressed more confidence that their plans for the future would in fact materialize than did the parents of children with lower GPAs. Further, they were more likely to believe that they could "...live much the way they want" while the parents of the lesser achievers were more likely to believe that the problems of life are too great to allow certainty about the future.

The parents of children who excel in school also value and seek new experiences. They are more likely to have come from urban backgrounds and to have had parents who themselves were comparatively better educated. Their feelings of efficacy extend to their children, over whom they perceive themselves as having a relatively high level of influence. Also, they use withholding of privileges as a primary way to influence the behavior of their children.

Factors in Economic and Academic Success Show Differences, Similarities There are striking differences between the factors associated with economic achievement in the study conducted for ORR and those found to be associated with scholastic performance in the present study. The ORR study found that the level of English fluency upon arrival in the U.S. was the most powerful single predictor of later economic standing. Minimal English proficiency--that is, any level beyond "none"--was found to enhance the likelihood of achieving economic self-sufficiency.

In the current study, however, neither the arrival nor the current English proficiency of the parents was found to be associated with the scholastic performance of the children. This is consistent with the finding that present economic standing was not associated with GPA.

There is, however, an important similarity between the findings of the two studies. Those households which achieved early economic independence were those in which both spouses were willing to participate in the workforce without regard for who was employed first. Thus, a high level of parental sharing of household responsibility is apparently critical for adaptation to both the demands of economic achievement and of children's scholastic achievement.

Expectations Contradicted Based on an extensive body of research on family size and school achievement, we would expect GPA to deteriorate with increased family size. Instead, we found families with five and six or more children doing as well as or better than those with fewer children. In order for achievement to be roughly equal across different size families, a high level of reciprocal helping--one child teaching another and therefore learning more as well--must go on, especially where scholastic achievement is so exceptional.

Also contradicting our expectations was the relationship of past socioeconomic standing to academic achievement. Past socioeconomic standing did not show up as an important predictor for scholastic achievement in the U.S. This is probably due to two factors.

First, the children of less educated, low occupational level parents simply would not have had opportunity for schooling in Southeast Asia. In the U.S., such opportunity is equally available to all children. Given that opportunity, these children, like their parents, are making the most of it, regardless of past socioeconomic status.

Second, the basic cultural values, motivations, household factors, etc. that are required for scholastic success in the U.S. are broadly shared by all the refugee families studied, regardless of past standing. That is, given the opportunity to succeed, they have the wherewithal to do so.

Education Seen as Better Way Up Than Employment In trying to understand the role played by the values ranked by these refugee families, what stands out is that these are values which reflect Confucian wisdom and prescriptions, or, more precisely, the core values of Confucianism complemented by the ideals of Buddhism. They are consistent with the standards of value and worldview typically cited as the Confucian ideals.

The refugees have apparently held fast to these values during the disruption of their lives. The pragmatic application of these values as operating principles has been to their advantage as they grappled with the problems of resettlement in a world vastly different from the one they left.

The limited types of employment available to the parents of these children, however, restrict their ability to use labor-force participation to achieve economic and social mobility. Limitations in language proficiency, relevant skills, etc. preclude such achievements, notwithstanding the refugees' belief in hard work. Thus, in order to make the most of the family's human resources, energies are re-channeled and invested where the long-term payoff will be greatest, namely, opportunity for their children to excel in school.

While the data suggest that the students in this study are excelling and, in the aggregate, their families are climbing out of poverty, these successes should not draw attention from the the fact that refugees are in serious need of effective assistance if they are to make economic and social progress. They have important health, educational, and economic needs that still must be met.

Recent Developments

PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED FY 86 REFUGEE ADMISSION CEILING RAISES OBJECTIONS

For the first time since U.S. refugee admissions ceilings were established in 1980, the president's proposed FY 86 ceiling was not reduced from the previous year's level. However, after key members of Congress objected to the proposed 70,000 ceiling, the administration continued consideration of the ceiling beyond the October 1 start of the fiscal year.

Secretary of State George P. Shultz presented the president's proposed ceiling to the Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy of the Senate Judiciary Committee on September 17 and to the full House Judiciary Committee on September 19.

Besides the discussion of FY 86 refugee admissions, the need to shift the U.S. resettlement program in Southeast Asia from refugee admissions to normal immigration channels was the predominant theme emerging from the annual refugee admissions consultations between the administration and Congress.

Simpson Disappointed with Proposed Ceiling Sen. Alan K. Simpson (R-Wyo.), chairman of the Senate subcommittee, told Shultz that it was disappointing to him that, for the first time, there was no reduction in the president's recommendation.

Simpson said that the proposed ceiling was still 40 percent above "normal levels" established in the Refugee Act of 1980. With no new refugee situations requiring U.S. resettlement and with decreased Southeast Asian refugee flows, Simpson asked why there was no reduction.

Shultz replied that because the worldwide refugee situation had actually worsened in some ways, it was not a time to continue the downward trend in admissions, but to stabilize them.

Congressional Responses Diverge Rep. Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) and Hamilton Fish, Jr. (R-N.Y.), chairman and ranking minority member respectively of the House Judiciary Committee, and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-Del.),

ranking minority members of the Senate Subcommittee on Immigration and Refugee Policy and of the Senate Judiciary Committee respectively, have sent letters to the president advising him that they concur with the overall ceiling recommended. Rep. Daniel E. Lungren (R-Calif.), ranking minority member on the House refugee subcommittee, also wrote to the president endorsing the recommended ceiling.

However, informed sources expect the president to revise the FY 86 ceiling to between 65,000 and 68,000 to reflect the views expressed in letters from other key members.

Members Oppose Unreduced FY 86 Ceiling

Rep. Romano L. Mazzoli (D-Ky.), chairman of the House immigration and refugee subcommittee, wrote, "I do not believe the proposed 70,000 refugee numbers are consistent with the Administration's previously stated objective of 'managing down' the Indochinese refugee program." Because the Southeast Asian situation has not worsened, Mazzoli wrote, "I see no valid reason why admissions cannot be reduced for FY 86."

Mazzoli also pointed out the likelihood that the House will approve the reduced refugee program funding level voted out by the Appropriations Committee, which Shultz had told Congress would cause a reduction in FY 86 admissions to 53,000. Mazzoli wrote the president that 53,000 may be an appropriate admissions level "in light of possible funding cuts and in light of the fact that many domestic programs for poor and underprivileged Americans have recently suffered drastic budget cuts."

Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) and Sen. Simpson, chairmen of the full Senate Judiciary Committee and of the refugee subcommittee respectively, wrote to the president recommending that the FY 86 ceiling be 60,000.

They said, "It would appear that the sustained high flow of refugees from Southeast Asia is becoming 'institutionalized.'" Their reasons for reducing admissions were that "there are few people remaining in Thailand who qualify as refugees of 'special interest' to the U.S." and that "the Vietnamese Orderly Departure Program (ODP) does not warrant the admission levels proposed by the Administration." Thurmond and Simpson wrote, "Because the [Southeast Asian refugee] 'emergency' is over, we believe it is important to continue a steady and meaningful reduction in Southeast Asian admissions."

Shultz Presents Regional Breakdown In the president's original proposal, the overall ceiling of 70,000 was broken down into 3,000 admissions for refugees from Africa; 40,000 for East Asian first asylum; 8,500 for the Orderly Departure Program; 9,500 for refugees from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union; 3,000 for refugees from Latin America and the Caribbean; and 6,000 for refugees from the Near East and South Asia.

Shultz pointed out that the 3,000 level for Latin America and the Caribbean was being established in hopes that Cuba would end suspension of the December 1984 migration agreement with the U.S. However, Shultz said, if the agreement is not resumed, part of the ceiling for that region will be allocated on a quarterly basis to other regions to meet unforeseen needs. If they are not needed elsewhere, he added, they will lapse unused.

Kennedy questioned Shultz on admissions from Latin America and the Caribbean, wondering why, with a FY 85 ceiling of 1,000, only 57 had been admitted, all of them Cubans. Given the continued violence in Guatemala and El Salvador, Kennedy asked why the U.S. has not found a single person from those countries eligible for resettlement. Kennedy pointed out that Canada had admitted some 3,000 and Australia 1,100 from the region in spite of fairly restrictive immigration policies and that Canada had admitted 627 Central American refugees from the U.S.

Shultz replied that the situation in El Salvador has improved dramatically so that people can return there without fear of persecution or danger to their lives. He said there were "justifiable hopes that democracy will emerge in Guatemala." Thus, it was desirable that people return there.

James Purcell, director of the State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs, said that the U.S. policy followed the preferred durable solutions agreed upon by UNHCR and the resettlement countries: voluntary repatriation when possible, resettlement within the region, and, only where those solutions were not possible, third country resettlement. Thus, in Central America, Purcell said, the U.S. is

bolstering the first asylum countries with aid.

ODP Ceiling Separate The separate ceiling for admission of refugees under ODP, Shultz said, is important in assuring the first asylum countries of Southeast Asia that expanding ODP does not mean a decrease in resettlement from first asylum camps. It also "sends a clear signal to Hanoi that the U.S. is prepared to make good on its offer to accept a large number of Amerasians and "reeducation camp" prisoners.

Shultz reported that approximately 12,000 refugees and immigrants will have left Vietnam through ODP during FY 85. Regarding the president's initiatives of one year ago for resettling Amerasians and current and former reeducation camp prisoners and their family members, Shultz reported mixed results. He said the number of Amerasians and family members released by Vietnam had nearly doubled from 2,200 in FY 84 to almost 4,000 in FY 85. But Vietnam has backed off from the willingness expressed earlier to allow reeducation camp prisoners to resettle in the U.S.

Some members of Congress criticized the operation of the ODP program. Simpson, in the consultation and in his and Thurmond's letter, said that ODP is bringing out of Vietnam those that Vietnam wants to expel, not those of concern to the U.S. Shultz said that all those who have come out of Vietnam under ODP during FY 85 were fully qualified under U.S. processing guidelines.

House Judiciary Committee members who had recently visited Southeast Asia expressed concern about the management of ODP. Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D-Colo.) and Rep. Bill McCollum (R-Fla.) agreed that their observation of ODP in Thailand left the impression that the program needed to be straightened out.

Shift of Resettlement Toward Immigration Urged Simpson said that the Southeast Asian program is at a crossroads where the nature of those fleeing is changing--increasingly, he said, they do not meet the refugee definition. Setting the theme that ran throughout the consultations, he said that the time had come to use regular immigration laws for family reunification and to save the Refugee Act for true refugees.

In his testimony before the House and Senate committees, Shultz said, "Those who have left their homes primarily for reasons of family reunification should, to the degree possible, use normal immigration programs which have been established for that purpose." He said the relevant agencies have been studying the increased use of normal immigration channels for family reunification and announced plans for a high-level panel to go to Southeast Asia with a broad mandate to recommend changes in U.S. refugee policy (See "Update").

Alan C. Nelson, commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, also testified that the administration believes it is essential to move toward broader use of regular immigration channels as the best way to maintain adequate levels of offtake from first asylum countries.

Concerns Expressed about Appropriations Cut Shultz said that if the proposed cut in refugee assistance funding made by the House Appropriations Committee--$45 million from the president's FY 86 budget proposal of $338 million--is not restored, refugee admissions would have to be reduced to 53,000. The largest reductions would be in Southeast Asia, threatening the preservation of first asylum there and elsewhere.

Shultz said the initiatives on Amerasians and reeducation prisoners would be undercut and "funds available for relief and assistance would be inadequate to maintain subsistence and survival" for refugees throughout the world.

Rodino and Fish, in their letter, and Lungren, in his, urged the president to find ways to fund the refugee program at the level of admissions proposed. Rodino and Fish suggested that if the appropriation is not restored and reprogramming of funds is not possible, they would expect the administration to submit a supplemental budget request to Congress for the additional funding needed to maintain the level of refugee admissions determined by the president. Lungren suggested alternatives for achieving the required funding level without increasing federal expenditures.

Limited Processing of Border Cambodians Announced Shultz also announced that, though resettlement abroad should not be viewed as the primary solution for border Cambodians, the U.S. has decided, "subject

to Thai government approval, to initiate a limited program to unite close family members with relatives already in this country primarily through immigration-type channels." Shultz assured the committees that the program would be handled carefully so as not to "trigger an unwarranted set of expectations."

The program would be for those Cambodians eligible for immigrant visas, "visas 93" for spouses and unmarried minor children, and for selected use of humanitarian parole. According to State Department sources, the total number of Cambodians that would be affected is in the hundreds.

To meet the needs of those in the border evacuation camps, Shultz said the administration would be working with the Thai government, international organizations, and the Cambodians themselves to develop a program for educating the young people there.

Efforts to Be Made to Move Land Vietnamese Shultz responded to concerns that the Cambodians who remain in Khao I Dang receive fair consideration for resettlement. He said that denied cases were reviewed in a "just and reasonable manner. The established review mechanism, which was formalized last February, remains in place to reconsider denied cases."

From the February start of the review process through August 30, 44 previous denials had been overturned and approved for resettlement, 78 denials had been upheld, and 26 were pending, according to the State Department. Since then, approximately 3,000 requests for review have been received.

Shultz also discussed concerns about the approximately 4,500 land Vietnamese in Thailand housed among evacuated Cambodians at Site 2 near the Cambodian border. Shultz said the U.S. is supporting a Red Cross initiative to obtain agreement to relocate them to a separate and more secure location. "As soon as necessary security provisions and international cooperation can be obtained, the U.S. is prepared to initiate a limited program to resettle those with close family ties to the U.S. and those of particular humanitarian concern, such as former 'reeducation camp' inmates."

Welfare Dependency Rates Addressed Most of the questioning of ORR Director Phillip N. Hawkes focused on the continuing high welfare dependency rates of refugees, particularly in California. Hawkes reported that ORR had begun to monitor the refugee program on a case-by-case basis in selected communities and had found two important trends. First, refugees were being given services, including a lot of English classes, in lieu of employment. Second, the refugees who were taking advantage of the services are among the least needy--they are already better educated, with better English, and less dependent on welfare.

Hawkes said technical assistance is being provided to states to help change the programs toward serving those most in need and encouraging the able to find employment.

Hawkes said that the California demonstration project being carried out with Wilson-Fish amendment funds, while only initiated in July, appears to be moving forward and changing the nature of refugee services in that state.

Update

° Secretary of State George P. Shultz has announced the formation of an independent, high-level panel to review the Indochinese refugee situation. He said the panel would have a broad mandate to recommend changes in U.S. refugee policy. Announcing the panel during consultations with Congress on FY 86 refugee admissions, Shultz said, "As we review the refugee situation in Southeast Asia today, we will continue to be guided by our bedrock concern for humanitarian principles." Shultz called the current Indochinese resettlement situation a "transition point" and said that an outside assessment of the program would be useful. The panel will travel to Southeast Asia in early November.

Shultz has named Robert D. Ray, governor of Iowa between 1969 and 1983 and now president and chief executive officer of Life Investors in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, panel chairman. Ray has long been active in refugee affairs. Under his leadership, Iowa carried out a major resettlement program for Indochinese refugees, resettling over 10,000.

The other panel members are Irena Kirkland, a holocaust survivor and former

refugee and a member of the board of the International Rescue Committee; Gale W. McGee, former senator from Wyoming and ambassador to the Organization of American States; Jonathon Moore, director of the Institute of Politics at Harvard and former deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs; and Edward C. Schmults, senior vice president and general counsel of GTE Corporation and former deputy attorney general.

° A census of the refugees in Khao I Dang camp in Thailand has found 7,100 unregistered, or "illegal," Cambodians who had been hiding within the camp. The census registered them in order to give them food cards that are valid for 30 days, according to a UN official's statement reported in the October 4 New York Times.

Concern has been voiced recently about increasing nutrition problems within the camp, both among the undocumented Cambodians, many of whom have been hiding in the camp since December or January, and the registered refugees, who have apparently been sharing their rations with unregistered relatives. The cards will allow international agencies to feed the newly registered Cambodians through October 31, but does not make them eligible for eventual resettlement.

° More than 1,000 Cambodian Muslims were moved from the Khao I Dang camp in Thailand on September 28 in preparation for resettlement in predominantly Muslim Malaysia. Most of those being resettled were among the undocumented "illegal" residents at Khao I Dang. Muslims are a minority group in Cambodia, which has a largely Buddhist population.

° The annual Orderly Departure Program meeting between Vietnamese and U.S. officials was held October 2 and 3 in Geneva under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. According to reports, there was some progress on technical issues concerning the operation of ODP, but none on the release and eventual resettlement of reeducation camp prisoners.

° The Senate version of the Moakley/DeConcini legislation (S. 377) was unanimously voted out of the Senate Judiciary Committee's immigration and refugees subcommittee on September 30, by a voice vote. The bill, which would temporarily suspend detention and deportation of Salvadorans while the General Accounting Office prepares a report on conditions in El Salvador, now awaits action by the full Senate Judiciary Committee.

The bill was voted out of the subcommittee "without recommendation." Bills may also be voted out "favorably" or "unfavorably." The vote was a crucial step in the life of the bill. It allows the bill to move closer to consideration by the full Senate.

A House version of the Moakley/DeConcini bill (H.R. 822) has yet to be scheduled for action by the Immigration, Refugees, and International Law Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee.

° Because Congress has failed to enact a FY 86 Foreign Aid Appropriations bill, which includes funds for overseas refugee assistance and U.S. admissions, those activities will be continued at FY 85 funding levels until November 15--the first 45 days of the new fiscal year--as part of a continuing resolution Congress has passed to keep government programs operating. If an appropriations bill is not passed by that date, another continuing resolution will be necessary.

° Federal Judge Robert P. Aguilar has ordered that $11.5 million in refugee funds be released by the Reagan administration to states with large numbers of refugees requiring social services. The funds were impounded by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) after the Office of Refugee Resettlement failed to spend $39 million of $77.5 million appropriated by Congress for targeted assistance in FY 84.

When an additional $50 million were appropriated for FY 85, OMB impounded the difference between $89 million--the new appropriation plus the carryover--and the $77.5 million level OMB said should be distributed. It was OMB's understanding that Congress had established that level as a ceiling in the continuing resolution for FY 85. Rep. Don Edwards (D-Cal.) and others brought suit against Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler over the funds being held.

Projects and Programs

ORR-FUNDED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE WORKS TO STANDARDIZE ESL INSTRUCTION

A program to establish consistent English-language instruction for refugees throughout the U.S. is now underway in the Mainstream English Language Training-Technical Assistance Project (MELT-TAP), a program funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement and administered by the Northwest Educational Cooperative in Illinois.

Modeled on a FY 83 and FY 84 demonstration project directed toward 1,375 students in 19 project sites, MELT-TAP attempts to standardize testing, curricula, and goals for ORR-funded English-language programs. In the demonstration project, students at every site were given the same tests, and teachers worked from an identical curriculum guide for every level of instruction.

Three new versions of the Basic English Skills Test (BEST) were developed for determining both placement and achievement. The tests enable educators to establish student performance levels.

MELT-TAP Provides Consistent Measure of Achievement Tipawan Truong-Quang Reed, director of MELT-TAP, expressed enthusiasm about the potential impact of MELT-TAP's consistent measure of student achievement. "In the past," she noted, "reporting on student performance levels was meaningless because there was no standard definition." Reed said that some programs lacked appropriate materials and measured a student's progress only in hours spent in classroom instruction.

With MELT, on the other hand, a core curriculum provides teachers with objectives at each student performance level. Language competency is not based on measures such as grammar. Rather, competency reflects levels of ability in specific language skills, such as being able to call for medical help or to describe an illness.

"The core curriculum represents a minimal competency for each student performance level," said Reed. But, she added, "Teachers are encouraged to add to, elaborate, and enrich the curriculum."

Reed observed that MELT-TAP should not only help to improve the general level and consistency of ESL instruction, but will enable potential funding sources "to measure one program against another by providing a standard definition for measuring and evaluating them."

For more information about MELT-TAP, or for MELT-TAP technical assistance, call 1-800-635-8827. In Illinois, call 1-800-851-3347.

SIMULATED U.S. HIGH SCHOOLS ORIENT REFUGEE ADOLESCENTS

Special programs are being offered in both the overseas refugee processing centers and in some U.S. public school districts to prepare adolescent refugees for entry into U.S. high schools.

The Preparation for American Secondary Schools (PASS) program simulates experiences refugees are likely to encounter when they enter American high schools. In September, the first group of students graduated from the simulated high school at the refugee processing center in Phanat Nikhom, Thailand.

PASS is the first mandatory intensive English as a second language/cultural orientation (IESL/CO) program for camp refugees between the ages of 13 and 16. Margo Peterson, a program associate at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), who helped to develop PASS, said, "PASS picks up a need that had not been met before."

"We start by trying to inculcate basic social and cultural skills," said Peterson, such as sitting still at a desk, raising hands, keeping notebooks and pencils, and changing classes on a bell schedule.

The 80 PASS students in the first class were all Cambodians. The only exposure most had to schooling was in the UNHCR camps, which provide native language instruction only.

Lacking much in the way of formal education, the Cambodian adolescents did not match the stereotyped expectations of program planners. "They were not shy and reserved," said Peterson, "but acted more like American third graders on the playground." Peterson observed how the goal of the 20-week program became "breaking the refugees into school" so that they would be able to learn in a classroom setting.

Refugee students line up for "lunch" in Phanat Nikhom's simulated school cafeteria.

photo by Consortium staff.

PASS Emphasizes Socialization over Academics Following typical U.S. high school schedules, students at the Phanat Nikhom school attend six 40-minute periods per day. Three of the six periods are devoted to ESL, one to math, one to American studies, and the final period, in native language, to guidance counseling.

Allene Grognet, associate director of CAL, told Refugee Reports, "We have to guard against meaningless content overload," and emphasized that the program focuses on socialization rather than academics.

Grognet observed, "We put a heavy emphasis on problem solving, on coping skills, when to get help, how to get information, how to deal with what they encounter, and when to turn outside the school community." Students learn the roles of teachers, principals, and guidance counselors, so that when they enter the American school system, they will know where to turn for help.

As Peterson pointed out, "In simulation you just do it"--the students are exposed to what is going to come, not by being taught about it, but by experiencing it themselves in a protected environment.

U.S. Schools Provide Model for PASS In preparing for PASS, Peterson visited about 20 educational programs in the U.S. that include specialized orientation for refugee and immigrant students. "We looked at these programs to guide us," said Peterson. She remarked on the generosity of U.S. educators with their curriculum ideas and materials. "Most of the material was readily adaptable to the camps," she said, "although some learning activities had to be modified."

Peterson was particularly impressed with the Newcomer High School in San Francisco. "It was a tremendous inspiration to us," she said. Newcomer is at the forefront of U.S. schools established to help limited-English-proficient (LEP) students adjust to mainstream public school systems.

Geared for students with little or no English-language proficiency, the Newcomer school currently has an enrollment of 410, according to program administrators. A majority of the staff is bilingual, and the students receive intensive ESL instruction.

San Francisco Newcomer School Emphasizes Survival Skills Students are permitted to enroll in the Newcomer High School only for one year, after which they enter bilingual programs in the San Francisco Unified School District. "One year is not enough for them to enter an all English program," said Ligaya Avenida, director of bilingual programs for the San Francisco school system.

"But," she added, "they do have survival skills after one year."

The school, with a small enrollment and a culturally sensitive staff provides "emotional support and security," according to Avenida. She reports that San Francisco area principals are very appreciative of the transition period given these students before entering their schools. It not only eases adjustment for the refugees, but is cost-effective as a means of consolidating resources for those students most in need of intensive language instruction.

A shortage of qualified bilingual instructors in Chinese and Indochinese languages and the fact that the Newcomer High School only reaches a fraction of the total LEP students (6,000 new LEP students enter the San Francisco district every year) are cited by Avenida as the primary problem areas still facing the school.

Nevertheless, the Newcomer High School serves as a model, not only for the refugee processing center in Phanat Nikhom and the new school just now starting in the refugee processing center in Bataan, the Philippines, but for similar newcomer schools located in areas with high concentrations of LEP students throughout the U.S.

Meetings and Conferences

"Southeast Asian Refugees in the United States--The First Decade" is the title of a conference to be held November 21-23, 1985 at the Lone Mountain Conference Center, the University of San Francisco, San Francisco, California.

Conference planners hope to bring together refugee leaders, researchers, policymakers, and resettlement workers to share their experiences during the past decade of Southeast Asian resettlement in America. Topics discussed will include the social and cultural adjustment of refugees, formation of Southeast Asian communities, the need for a coherent federal refugee policy, and refugees in the labor force.

The conference is being organized by the Refugee Resource Center in San Francisco, and cosponsored by the University of San Francisco and the Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement and Immigration of the California State Legislature.

The registration fee is $60 for individuals, $40 per person from organizations sending three or more people, and $30 for students and senior citizens. For further information, contact Christine Finnan, Conference Coordinator, Refugee Resource Center, 211 Gough St., Ste. 208, San Francisco, CA 94102-5905. (415) 626-2727.

Resources

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDENTS

The Los Angeles County Office of Education has published a second edition of Materials for Indochinese Students: An Annotated Bibliography. The bibliography provides descriptions of a wide variety of resources that will help teachers working with Southeast Asian students. Materials geared for students from elementary-school age to adults (including materials for the illiterate) offer learning opportunities in language arts, the social sciences, and mathematics and science. In addition to descriptions of textbooks and other instructional tools, the 79-page bibliography also highlights Indochinese literary works and translations of English works into Vietnamese, Lao, Hmong, Cambodian, and Chinese.

Each entry includes a description of the resource, the languages in which it is available, the target audience, and price. To order, send $3.50, plus sales tax for California residents, to Chuck Acosta, Los Angeles County Office of Education, Division of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, 9300 E. Imperial Highway, Downey, CA 90242-2890. (213) 922-6320.

NEW PUBLICATION IMPROVES COMMUNICATION BETWEEN OVERSEAS AND U.S. REFUGEE TRAINING PROGRAMS

The second issue of Passage: A Journal of Refugee Resettlement has recently been published. The journal's function is to exchange information among educators in both the overseas programs and the U.S.

Aimed at practitioners working with refugees, 70 percent of the articles have been written by people working in the overseas

program, according to Don Ranard, Washington, D.C. editor. Each of the refugee processing centers in Asia has its own site editor for the publication.

Passage is a joint project of the agencies implementing the Intensive English as a Second Language, Cultural Orientation, and Pre-Employment Training Program (IESL/CO/PET) in the refugee processing centers in Galang, Indonesia, Bataan, the Philippines, and Phanat Nikhom, Thailand. These agencies include the International Catholic Migration Commission, the Refugee Service Center, Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), and the Consortium of the Experiment in International Living, Save the Children Federation, and World Education. Passage is funded by the Bureau for Refugee Programs of the U.S. State Department and has editorial offices in the CAL Refugee Service Centers in Manila, the Philippines and Washington, D.C.

Articles from the first two issues include practical ideas for techniques that can be applied in teaching refugees (such as simulations, games, and uses of drawings), theoretical essays on ESL/CO/PET, book reviews, and human interest stories, such as a "day-in-the-life" diary of a supervisor in the Galang camp, a photo-essay about Bataan, and a Vietnamese student's graduation speech.

Although primarily geared towards those working with Southeast Asian refugees in the overseas camps, the first issue also included overviews of ESL/CO programs for Ethiopian and East European refugees.

Subscriptions to Passage are available for $9, prepaid, from the Center for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St., NW, Washington, DC 20037. Passage is published three times per year.

REFUGEE PROCESSING CENTERS ON VIDEO

The Refugee Processing Centers in Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines are presented in "Teaching for Tomorrow," a 35-minute, color videotape produced by the Media Group and the Center for Applied Linguistics. Lao, Vietnamese, and Khmer students are shown "shopping" in mock supermarkets, discovering the use of pocket calculators, boarding "airplanes," and even practicing use of Western-style toilets. The film also presents the refugees undergoing intensive English language instruction, pre-employment training, and cultural orientation prior to their arrival in the U.S.

Asian ESL teachers stress survival skills. In one scene, the teacher presents the class with a hypothetical situation of a poisoned child: "What are you going to do?" she asks, as the students call out their answers. "No, you don't want to make an appointment with the doctor, your child just drank poison!" A toy ambulance helps to get the message across to the class. Key English phrases are then drilled.

Interviews with American supervisors of the centers' programs show the professional perspective on the learning experience. The video is intended to provide domestic resettlement personnel working with the "graduates" of the RPCs with insight into their pre-arrival training and life in the camps.

The video is available from the Center for Applied Linguistics, Refugee Service Center, 1118 22nd St., NW, Washington, DC 20037 for $50. It is also available on a loan basis.

LIFELINES TEACHES ENGLISH COPING SKILLS

Survival skills for adults with little or no proficiency in English are emphasized in Lifelines, a textbook series for teaching English as a second language. Students are introduced to a variety of coping strategies that recur with increasing complexity in each of the four texts in the series. In volume one, for example, the health chapter teaches students how to describe aches and pains, using simple grammar and vocabulary. In volume two, the health chapter treats the more complex task of buying items in a drug store. Volume four prepares students for answering questions in a medical examination. Other topics treated in the series include personal information, money and banking, transportation, food and restaurants, clothing, housing, and community resources.

Photos of actual bank deposit slips, application forms, and menus are provided to help adult refugees understand many of the confusing situations they are likely to encounter upon their arrival in the United States.

The series of four books is available

for $21 from Regents Publishing Company. Catalogues can be ordered by writing to Regents at 2 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10016.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION FOR HMONG AND LAO STUDENTS

Two videotapes on the integration and education of Lao and Hmong students have been produced by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. The videotapes and accompanying guide, From Laos to the Midwest, provide historical and cultural background on these refugees and present several models for bilingual education programs.

Each of the featured school districts is working to coordinate programs for limited English-proficiency students with mainstream instruction and to use bilingual teachers. Each is also faced with distinct challenges depending on the size and character of the school and the type of refugee students. Both teenage and elementary students are featured, and the special educational needs of refugee girls are addressed.

For information about From Laos to the Midwest and the videotapes, "Fitting In" and "Pain and Promise," contact Ezequiel B. Vargas, Bilingual-Bicultural Education, Department of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 7841, Madison, WI 53707.

MARIEL CUBAN IMPACT ON SOUTH FLORIDA SCHOOLS

Despite the overwhelming odds created by linguistic and cultural differences and delayed federal aid, public school systems in south Florida were able to integrate thousands of refugee children who came from Cuba during the Mariel boatlift in the late spring and summer of 1980, according to a recent publication of the Cuban American National Foundation.

The awesome task of assimilating 11,000 new immigrant students within the span of a few months is described in The Children of Mariel: From Shock to Integration, by Helga Silva. The equivalent of an entire school district had to be hired in six weeks--including 668 new teachers who were certified and preferably bilingual.

Fortunately, the Dade County school system was, since the 1962 influx of Cuban refugees, experienced in bilingual education. The system was able to provide a summer English-for-speakers-of-other-languages (ESOL) immersion program for 9,000 of the children. Bilingual and ESOL programs continued during the regular school year.

Many Mariel Adolescents Had Need for Better Counseling Despite notable successes among the Mariel students, Silva points out that many had difficulty in overcoming both the traumatic refugee experience and the American public's suspicious and negative reception. Castro's dumping of both criminals and mental patients among the refugees stigmatized the entire Mariel contingent, according to the author, and "the sense of rejection filtered down to the children of Mariel."

Unaccompanied minors, numbering about 2,000, faced an especially difficult experience, said Silva. Most of them were teenage boys with little schooling. Three years after they arrived, Florida state officials had records for less than 50 of them.

Piedad Bucholtz, south central area superintendent of the Dade County public schools is quoted: "I think we lost a considerable number of students through the cracks at the high school level because there were not enough bilingual counselors." He added, "I also think we could have used greater interaction with the community agencies, especially those geared to mental health. It would have helped a lot of children with emotional traumas."

Silva is critical of the federal government for what she calls a succession of failures in providing adequate and timely funding for the Dade County schools. She says that Washington failed to provide meaningful screening to assess the educational needs of the children and that failure to provide funds resulted in large class sizes and insufficient resources for academic and psychological counseling. "This dearth of funding continues to plague the school systems of south Florida," observes Silva.

The 68-page volume, published with the help of a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, provides an interesting mix of interviews, statistics, graphs, photos, and text. The Children of Mariel may be purchased for $2.00 from the Cuban American National Foundation, 1000 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20007.

Statistics

FY 85 REFUGEE ARRIVALS* BY STATE OF RESETTLEMENT AND COUNTRY OF ORIGIN AS OF AUGUST 31, 1985

STATE	YTD FY 85	STATE	YTD FY 85
ALABAMA	232	NEW JERSEY	825
ALASKA	42	NEW MEXICO	274
ARIZONA	1,066	NEW YORK	4,415
ARKANSAS	131	NORTH CAROLINA	587
CALIFORNIA	19,213	NORTH DAKOTA	191
COLORADO	581	OHIO	961
CONNECTICUT	799	OKLAHOMA	563
DELAWARE	8	OREGON	881
DIST OF COLUMBIA	324	PENNSYLVANIA	1,855
FLORIDA	1,501	RHODE ISLAND	423
GEORGIA	1,220	SOUTH CAROLINA	77
HAWAII	280	SOUTH DAKOTA	112
IDAHO	468	TENNESSEE	537
ILLINOIS	2,650	TEXAS	4,500
INDIANA	260	UTAH	787
IOWA	461	VERMONT	41
KANSAS	692	VIRGINIA	1,364
KENTUCKY	297	WASHINGTON	2,463
LOUISIANA	738	WEST VIRGINIA	40
MAINE	242	WISCONSIN	445
MARYLAND	914	WYOMING	12
MASSACHUSETTS	2,464	AMERICAN SAMOA	0
MICHIGAN	933	GUAM	0
MINNESOTA	1,522	JOHNSON ATOLL	0
MISSISSIPPI	121	NO. MARIANNA ISLANDS	0
MISSOURI	761	MIDWAY ISLANDS	0
MONTANA	33	PUERTO RICO	0
NEBRASKA	122	TRUST TERRITORIES	0
NEVADA	223	VIRGIN ISLANDS	0
NEW HAMPSHIRE	162	WAKE ISLANDS	0
		UNKNOWN	2
		TOTAL YTD FY 85	59,815

COUNTRY	BIRTHPLACE	CIT.°	COUNTRY	BIRTHPLACE	CIT.°
AFGHANISTAN	2,149	2,201	LESOTHO	6	6
ALBANIA	42	41	LIBYA	0	5
ANGOLA	32	46	MALAWI	4	6
ARGENTINA	7	0	MALAYSIA	78	0
AUSTRIA	20	0	MOZAMBIQUE	8	8
BANGLADESH	1	0	NAMIBIA	11	9
BELGIUM	1	1	PAKISTAN	35	0
BOTSWANA	30	7	PHILIPPINES	457	0
BULGARIA	123	118	POLAND	2,509	2,439
CHINA	350	1	ROMANIA	3,855	3,689
CUBA	157	128	SAUDI ARABIA	0	1
CYPRUS	3	0	SINGAPORE	4	0
CZECHOSLOVAKIA	914	923	SOUTH AFRICA	20	24
EL SALVADOR	3	3	SUDAN	120	0
ETHIOPIA	1,319	1,427	SWITZERLAND	1	0
FRANCE	3	0	SYRIA	1	1
GERMANY (FED. REP.)	31	2	TAIWAN	2	0
GREECE	17	0	THAILAND	4,642	0
HONG KONG	123	0	TURKEY	4	0
HUNGARY	491	494	UGANDA	9	0
INDONESIA	176	3	UNITED KINGDOM (ENG)	1	0
IRAN	2,864	2,891	UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	2	0
IRAQ	221	233	USSR	540	515
ISRAEL	0	4	VIETNAM	21,237	22,308
ITALY	23	2	YUGOSLAVIA	19	22
JAPAN	3	0	ZAIRE	26	28
KAMPUCHEA	13,227	17,103	ZAMBIA	11	6
KENYA	2	0	BORN ON BOARD/SEA	1	0
LAOS	3,859	4,653	UNKNOWN	4	462
LEBANON	6	5	OTHER	11	0
			TOTAL FOR YTD FY 85	59,815	59,815

* This report is based on documents from the Refugee (formerly ACVA) Data Center, ICM and other federal agencies available on the above date and may not include information on all refugees in the categories reported.

° Note: Children born in refugee camps are assigned citizenship of parents. Citizenship information is often lacking, especially for non-Southeast Asians.

SOURCE: Office of Refugee Resettlement.

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